WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
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"THE AGRICULTURAL FRONT"

(For Immediate Broadcast)

May....1944

It's May on the "Agricultural Front"! And, among other things, that means that it's time for Victory Gardeners to get out and dig. This is the beginning of the fifth month in this year of decision...a year, also of record food needs. Today, I'd like to talk about milk conservation, egg production, farm labor, container salvage, and a few up-to-the minute announcements of special interest to you farmers.

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First, there's a story on milk quota adjustments. Recent evidence shows that the Dairy Payment Program has stopped the downward trend in milk production. With normal weather conditions, production should continue at the same or a slightly higher level, as in 1943. Now, during May and June, under adjustments of Food Distribution Order 79, milk dealers may sell the same amounts of milk and milk by-products as they did last June. Sales quotas on fluid milk will stay the same...that is, 100 percent of the sales in June, 1943...but in most cases quotas on cream and by-products can be transferred to fluid milk. So dealers may distribute their increased allotments in fluid milk, cream, or by-products, depending on the demands in their localities.

A logical question at this point would be...why were those changes made in FDO 79? Here's the answer. The peak months in milk production are

usually May and June, and this year, an even greater than normal percentage of the total annual milk output is expected to be concentrated in the peak period. So, with manpower and containers short, and transportation facilities under wartime stress, a revision of quotas was necessary to make marketing easier during May and June.

The WFA didn't consider it necessary or advisable to remove quotas completely, even just for the peak period. If consumers cooperate, and the trade uses all available manufacturing facilities to their greatest advantage, there need by no milk wasted for lack of a market.

And this is an important point to remember. If a dealer finds that he can't market all of his milk, even with the increased quotas, he may apply to his market agent for further specific relief. Thirty-four market agents in all parts of the country will be able to attend to those petitions promptly, so no milk need to be wasted because of the milk conservation program.

On April 26th , last Wednesday, the War Food Administration announced the dairy production payment rates for the period May 1944 through March 1945. These payments are, of course, subject to Congressional approval for administrative expense. They are designed to stimulate heavier production during the fall and winter when feed costs are highest.

The new rates will continue the existing geographical differences in payments. During the summer months, when cows are on pasture, and feed costs at their lowest, all payments on whole milk will be reduced 15 cents per hundredweight, and butterfat payments will be reduced two cents per pound.

Then during the winter period, from September through March 1945, payments on whole milk delivered will be increased by $.25 per hundredweight. At the same time, butterfat payments will be increased $.04 a pound. The range of payment for fluid milk deliveries during the winter period will be sixty to ninety cents per hundredweight, and payment on butterfat deliveries will be $.10 a pound in all areas.

The announcement of dairy product rates of payment for eleven months ahead is designed to encourage dairy farmers to conserve grain feeds during the pasture season. This will make it possible for them to feed heavier during the fall and winter when the rates of payment are highest.

So the War Food Administration is taking all possible measures to encourage milk production. The reasons for this action are the increasing war needs for dairy products, and the necessity for keeping civilian supplies of those products at the present level. And here are the rates of payment in the Northeast Region for the period from May 1944 through March 1945.

All counties of Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and West Virginia will receive 45 cents for fluid milk, from the period of May through August, and 70 cents from September through March.

The rate for fluid milk in all counties of Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island is 55 cents from May through August, and 80 cents from September through March.

The butterfat pay ment for the entire region will be 6 cents from May through August and 10 cents from September through March.

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Here's an announcement to remember. Dairy farmers and milk dealers in the Boston, Massachusetts area will vote within a few days on proposed amendments to the Federal Order and agreement regulating milk marketing in that area. The amendments were drawn up by the War Food Administration on the basis of information presented at a public hearing, and of exceptions to preliminary proposals which were filed by the industry.

To become effective, the proposed amendments must be approved by at least two-thirds of the eligible farmers voting in the referendum and signed by 50 percent of the dealers. If the required number of dealers do not sign the agreement as amended, the proposed changes must be approved by the Director of Economic Stabilization before they can be made effective. Remember...watch for the voting date!

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Now let's move to another all-important wartime food,...eggs. A special report has just been compiled by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from an inquiry covering hatcheries in States producing 85 percent of all commercially hatched chicks. The report showed 13 percent fewer eggs set and 4 percent fewer chicks hatched in the first half of April this year than at the same time last year.

Hatchery-men reported that the output of chickens during April and May would be only about two-thirds of the output during April and May last year. If such a decrease should be the case, production of chicks for the first five months of this year would be almost 20 percent less than during the record high output at this time last year, and five percent less than at that time in 1942. Decreases of eggs set during the first

half of April amounted to about 20 percent in New England States, and about ten percent in the Mid-Atlantic states.

Talking about eggs brings me to this unusual fact...there are more eggs than there are egg cases. And poultrymen aren't the only farmers who are feeling the pinch of the container shortage. The thing to do is to make the cases you do get go as far as they can. Better handle egg cases as carefully as you handle eggs...because it's the cases we're short of. The shortage of egg cases and other containers is serious. The responsibility for solving your own container needs rests largely with you. Begin now to accumulate the containers you'll need for your fruits and vegetables. Your county agent or county war board may be able to help you by getting the container needs of your county together and tackling the problem through joint action. Handle containers with care, keep them repaired, use containers with slight damages as long as you believe no injury to the produce will result. Remember...begin now to accumulate your future container needs...the shortage is serious!

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Besides a shortage of egg cases, there's another critical shortage problem. That's farm labor. On March 1st, 1944, the number of workers on farm was the lowest ever recorded. The number of hired workers on farms this March 1st was over a million less than last year at the same time. Crop reports show that you must intend to rely almost entirely on your family to get your farm work done. Here's a couple of points to keep in mind. Keep in touch with your county agent, your County War Board, and the United States Employment Service. United States Crop Corps and the Women's Land Army will b e recruiting workers from town and cities

to work on farms just as they did last year. Make certain your labor requirements are in the hands of those whose job it is to place your claims where you'll get some results.

I just got an announcement that I think will interest you. More nitrogen for crops is now available. From now on, a farmer may apply as much straight chemical nitrogen material per acre as the State Agricultural Experiment Station for his area, and for the crop on which he plans to use the material.

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My last item has to do with ceiling prices on heavy hogs. The consumption of feed, especially corn, which brought about heavy expansion in livestock production has resulted in an acute corn shortage. For this reason OPA has taken action designed to discourage the use of corn to bring hogs to heavy uneconomical weights. The OPA action lowers the ceiling price on hogs weighing 240 lbs. or over from the present price, $14.75 per hundredweight, to $14.00 per hundredweight. Be sure to keep your hogs at an economical weight, and you will help to conserve badly needed feed!

This isn't just May any year...This is May, 1944! One way to make sure that our fighting forces gain Victory is to produce enough food to meet the needs of our nation and its armed forces all over the world. This is the year to make Food Fight For Freedom!